

# **BUILDING PERMITTING PRIMER**

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Intake: the intake process is the stage in which the permit application is created. During this stage all drawings are submitted for review and approval.

Plan Review: the Bureau of Buildings performs a plan review for verification of compliance with Building Code, Life Safety Code, and the Georgia Accessibility Code requirements.

The Bureau's plan reviewers also coordinate the assemblage of all reviews and issuance of building permits. All plans must be accurate, legible, include dimensions, be drawn to a standard scale, and meet minimum industry-wide acceptable architectural and engineering standards.

Plans marked "Not Released for Construction", "preliminary" and "permit only" will not be accepted for review, except as noted for site and foundation permits. The City of Atlanta reserves the right to require additional information for plan review analysis.

Permit Issuance: once all departments have given approval the permit will be released for permit issuance by the plan reviewer. Once released for issuance the plans are then taken to permit issuance where all fees are totaled and then paid for at the City's finance cashiers located on the first floor.

The following method of payments acceptable: cash, credit card or certified checks and personal checks. Business checks are not allowed.

Each site that a building permit has been issued is required to indicate permit issuance within 24 hours in a viewable location and remain posted for 30 days. The posted sign must have a copy of the issued permit and must not be less than six square feet with the words "NOTICE OF ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMIT" with letters not less than four inches high.

Assembly Buildings: include restaurants, amusements/recreational, nightclubs, theaters, stadiums, church

Commercial Buildings: includes mercantile, offices, businesses, repair garages, parking decks, warehouses and/or office/warehouses.

Industrial Buildings: includes industrial buildings and/or plant.

Government Buildings: includes public administration, public recreation, public safety, public maintenance building and/or airport.

Institutional Buildings: includes hospitals, clinics, dental, nursing homes and/or assisted living facilities.

Multifamily Residential: includes apartments, condominiums, town homes, multifamily accessories and/or residential/commercial.

Educational Buildings: include public schools, private schools, colleges/universities and vocational training museums.

Lodging Residence Buildings: includes hotels/motels, rooming houses, dormitories, shelters and/or single room occupancies.

Inspections: official viewing or examinations made by field inspectors of the Bureau of Buildings

Building Inspection Division: the Building Inspection Division examines all building permits for compliance as well as handling complaints. The Building Inspection Division also issues Certificates of Occupancy.

Electrical Division: the Electrical Division is responsible for the inspection of all electrical and low voltage permits for code compliance. This division also handles complaints and power authorizations.

Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Division: the Heating, Ventilating, & Air Conditioning Division (HVAC) inspects all HVAC and gas lines for code compliance.

Plumbing Division: the Plumbing Division inspects all plumbing and sprinkler permits for code compliance. The Plumbing Division also handles complaints and sewer tap approvals.

Zoning Division: the Zoning Division inspects all sign permits for code compliance, approves all building permits for zoning compliance, and conducts zoning research and verification.

Zoning requirements are governed by the City of Atlanta Zoning Ordinance. The requirements addressed in the zoning ordinance include:

- Setback requirements
- Permitted uses
- Density
- Height
- Off street parking
- Sign permit requirements

[Click here](#) for a complete copy of the City of Atlanta Zoning Ordinance.

There are also additional requirements for special use permits, special administrative permits, variances, special exceptions and certificates of appropriateness.

Special Use Permits: are used in connection with land uses, identified within particular zoning classifications that are of substantial significance or of unusual operational characteristics. City Council approves Special Use Permits after public notifications, hearings and recommendations by the Zoning Review Board. *The processing, review, and decision-making time for Special Use Permits is a minimum of 90 days.*

Special Administrative Permits: are used where complex or unusual technical determinations are involved and/or in conjunction with temporary uses and structures when the matter does not require public notifications and hearings. Special Administrative Permits are approved by the Bureau of Planning. *The processing, review, and decision-making time for Special Administrative Permits is a maximum of 30 days.*

Variances or Special Exceptions: are used in conjunction with construction proposals where consideration of effects on the surrounding property is of principal importance, and include but are not limited to: building additions that involve yard set-back reductions, construction of fences and walls, and reductions in required parking. Variances or Special Exceptions are decided by the Board of Zoning Adjustment after public notification and hearing. *The processing time for Variances and Special Exceptions is a minimum of approximately eight (8) weeks.*

Historic Preservation: issues are subject to approval by the Urban Design Commission which approves issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness.

The Site Development Section of the Department of Watershed Management: reviews proposed construction plans for civil engineering related issues. Primary concerns are: grading and drainage, storm water management, connections to sanitary sewer, stream bank buffers, flood plains, and erosion and sediment control. Standard plan review fees apply.

The City of Atlanta Code and the Official Code of Georgia also requires a fee of \$40/disturbed acre be paid to the City and an additional \$40/disturbed acre be paid to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

All Site Development fees are due during issuance of a building permit.

Stream buffer: a restricted area (parcel of land) within a specified distance from a stream or “waters of the state” where construction or land disturbance is not allowed.

Stop work order: a directive by the Bureau of Buildings to discontinue a specified construction activity.